CHAPTER: ONE

Autobiography as a Literary Genre: Theory and Practice

Autobiography may not have been a traditional literary genre in Indian culture, but from the nineteenth century onwards we begin to find texts that narrate personal lives. Critical studies of these personal narratives have been slow to emerge. The few Indian autobiographies which have widely drawn attention of the researchers world-wide are: M. K. Gandhi's *Autobiography or My Experiment with Truth* (1927), Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography* (1936), Nirad C. Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951) and few others. Gandhi, Nehru and Chaudhuri, individually represent different world-views, but socio-culturally they belong to a common category, i.e. they were upper caste men and hence privileged to speak to the world. In recent time there has been a considerable number of critical studies on Indian upper caste women's autobiographies. On the other hand, Dalits, who have been raising their voices for quite sometime through their respective personal narratives were rarely heard of and thus systematically neglected in the academic circle. One possible reason for this neglect could be the fact that these voices challenge the hegemony of the upper caste and make way for the assertion of the marginal self. The recent interest among the scholars to study the autobiographies of Dalits and women, though marginal, is a positive direction for their proper rehabilitation.

My dissertation is an attempt to contribute to the proper critical evaluation of Indian autobiographies in general by examining the specific dimensions of gender and caste with particular emphasis on the autobiographies of Dalits. While doing so, my focus will be more on autobiography as a narrative rather than autobiography as historical document, because all personal narratives are shaped by certain unspoken priorities of the 'self' in its negotiation with the society. Before analysing the selected texts, I shall make an attempt to define the very term 'autobiography' by splitting it into its three components: auto=self, bio=life, graph=writing. Thus, while defining the genre, emphasis will be given on the problematic of all three terms: what is self; in what way is the shape of a life determined and recorded; what is considered worth recording and whether this is conditioned by existing literary paradigms or social priorities and also on the act of writing - who can write, who learns to write, for whom autobiography is written, etc. Since autobiography as a well established literary genre has its origin in the West, I shall historically trace out its foundation and follow its development both thematically and structurally by analysing in the present chapter some of

the classical texts, such as, Saint Augustine's *Confessions*[1] (397-98 A.D.), Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*[2] (1789), Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*[3] (1818) and J. S. Mill's *Autobiography*[4] (1873). This will help us to understand the issues involved in studying autobiography both in theory and practice.

Compared to the western autobiographical tradition, writing about one's life-story is a relatively recent one in India. Banarasidas' *Ardhakathanaka* (1641) is considered to be the first full-fledged Indian autobiography. At this point several questions can be asked, e.g. why did it take several centuries for the genre to emerge in India as compared to its earlier emergence in the West? Does it need a specific cultural space for its emergence, which was not available in India then? Does a literary genre depend upon a certain philosophical pre-conditions? These questions will, perhaps, lead us to have a look at the nature of Indian caste society and its dominant Hindu world-view, which shapes the mind of an individual. Indian autobiographies are numerous and written in many different languages and it is not possible for any single researcher to look at the entire field. In my study I shall primarily use texts available in English, but I shall also refer to those written in Indian languages and subsequently translated into English. I will restrict myself to texts that call themselves specifically autobiographies and not include novels and other forms that use the autobiographical mode. Thus, out of several mainstream autobiographies, M. K. Gandhi's *Autobiography or My Experiment with Truth*, Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography*, Nirad C. Chaudhuri's *An Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* and Mulk Raj Anand's *An Apology for Heroism* (1946) will be taken for critical analysis in Chapter 2.

Indian upper caste women's autobiographies need to be discussed separately because unlike men, women were under-privileged on several counts. Firstly, education among women was not encouraged earlier and it is not given priority even now. Secondly, under the patriarchal social order they are expected to place their traditional roles as daughters, wives and mothers above an individual identity. Autobiographies coming out of such an environment are bound to be different from men's autobiographies. Indian women started writing their autobiographies quite late, during nineteenth century because education was not freely available to them. But today, the number of women's autobiographies available in the market gives us an impression that as if every woman has a tale to tell. Due to lack of space it is difficult to include all the women's autobiographies available in English. However, I shall include Rassundari Devi's two parts autobiography *Amar Jivan*[5] (Bengali, 1868 and 1897),

Ramabai Ranade's *Amchya Ayushtil Kahi Athavani* (Marathi, 1910), Binodini Dasi's two parts autobiography i.e. *Amar Katha* (Bengali, 1912) and *Amar Abhinetri Jiban* (Bengali, 1924-25), Lakshmibai Tilak's *Smriti Chitre* (Marathi, 1934-37) and Ramabai Choudhuri's *Jiwan Pathe* (Oriya, 1984), for analysis in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 will deal with the socio-cultural background of Dalits and Dalit literature. This will help us to understand the circumstances in which Dalit autobiography has its origin. The emergence of Dalit autobiography gives a new dimension to the study of autobiography. Apart from being marginal, Dalits have been denied education for quite long time in Indian caste society. Now that they are getting educated, some of them have been using writing as a weapon for their social assertion. Thus writing autobiography is a special act for the members of this group who use the genre to achieve a sense of identity and mobilise resistance against oppression. This phenomenon will be largely understood when we critically analyse some of the Dalit autobiographies, such as, Hazari's *Untouchable: An Autobiography of an Indian Outcaste* (1951), Laxman Mane's *Upara* (Marathi, 1984), Sharankumar Limbale's *Akkarmashi* (Marathi, 1984), D. P. Das' *The Untouchable Story* (1985), Narendra Jadhav's *Amcha Baap Aani Amhi* (Marathi, 1993), Vasant Moon's *Vasti*, (Marathi, 1995), Balwant Singh's *An Untouchable in the IAS* (English,1997), Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* (Hindi,1997), Laxman Gaikward's *Uchalya* (Marathi, 1998), D.R. Jatav's *A Silent Soldier: An Autobiography* (English: 2000), and Shyamlal's *Untold Story of a Bhangi Vice-chancellor* (English, 2001). One important aspect about studying Dalit autobiographies is that they cannot be appreciated or properly evaluated in terms of the existing conventions of evaluating autobiographies written by the educated upper caste writers. Many of these narratives have not, in fact, been written down. They have been orally communicated and then recorded by others. For instance, the moving life-story of an unlettered ex-untouchable Muli titled *Untouchable: An Indian Life History* (1979) has been recorded by an American anthropologist James Freeman. Work like this demand a new critical orientation. This will be attempted in Chapter 5.

While Dalit men are the victims of caste and class oppression, Dalit women find themselves as the victims of double oppression: by the upper caste men as well as by the men of their own community. Their struggle is, on the one hand, for existence and on the other, to protect themselves against the hostile social environment. This hostility pervades all spheres, at home as well as outside. And hence, their struggle is continuous. The biggest handicap of

Dalit women is their lack of education. In spite of nearly five decades of literacy programmes and formal educational facilities, the number of literates among Dalit women is still abysmally low. These women cannot write but can speak their woes before somebody who can write on behalf of them. Sumitra Bhave's *Pan on Fire* (Marathi, 1988) – a collection of oral narratives and Josiane Racine and Jean-Luc Racine's collaborative work titled *Viramma: Life of an Untouchable* (1997) are two such exemplary work. Bama's *Karukku* (Tamil, 1992) also will be included to study the dynamics of Dalit women's autobiographies. In addition I shall include in my analysis two autobiographical extracts i.e. Shantabai Kamble's *Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha* (Marathi, 1990) and Kumud Pawde's *Antasphot* (Marathi, 1981) which are available in English translation in *Poisoned Bread* (1992) edited by Arjun Dangle. A short autobiographical account of Urmila Pawar with the title *Amhihi Itihas Ghadawala or Urmila Pawar and the Making of History* (English, 1998) is also available. A proper analysis of these works will be made in Chapter 6.

II

The Autobiographical Tradition in the West

Autobiography has for a long time been a well-established literary genre in the West. The tradition of writing about one's life goes back to Plato's *Seventh Epistle*[6] (4th century B.C.) where he describes an important period in his life. There are also sources which tell us that some of the early Roman rulers like Lutatius, Catulus, Scarus, Rutilius, Rufus, Sulla, Caeser have left behind some parts of their life-accounts mostly concerning their military achievements. Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius and other Roman philosophers, while expounding their philosophies, are known to have referred to some aspects of their life.[7] However, Saint Augustine's *Confessions* is the best-known piece of writing about one's life. This was followed by dozen of similar works written by Justin, the Martyr; Hilarius, the Bishop of Poitiers; Gregory of Nazianzus, Ennodius, Paulinus of Pella, Patrick and Saint Teresa.[8] These authors, under the impact of Christianity, had undergone intense and unusual experiences involving a sense of dramatic transition from ignorance to truth, from a life of sin to one of virtue. Since their ruptured and transformed lives could not be told as coherent stories gradually unfolding in time, their accounts took the form of passionate and emotionally charged confessions suffused with the spirit of self-discovery and self-pity. Having embarked upon an exciting spiritual journey, they were anxious to share its joys and agonies with others and to urge them to undertake it themselves. Thus almost all confessions written through the

ages had a didactic and evangelical orientation and concentrated on a general message rather than the details of individual lives.

The confessional mode of writing underwent certain important changes in Europe and grew more reflective once Christianity became an established religion and lost its earlier novelty. This happened during the late Middle Age, and especially during the Renaissance when non-confessional and secularly oriented accounts of life began to appear. During this time diaries, memoirs, chronicles, journals and other forms of writing became popular and paved the way for autobiography in the modern sense. Over time autobiography developed into a unique and autonomous genre of writing detailing its author's life. For example, Rousseau's *Confessions*, although it has a little similar to Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, the subject matter it deals with is purely secular. In spite of this change in its thrust autobiography as a genre received impetus from the religious culture of the West as well as the economic transformation of the society, which enabled individuals to assert their uniqueness. But even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, spiritual autobiographies and confessional journals were quite common among the Puritans as for example, John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*[9] (1666). In fact, one of the early examples of the novel in England, i.e. Daniel Defoe's fictional text *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) can easily be placed in the tradition of Puritan journal writing.[10] In the nineteenth century although that is not the only way of reading the novel Charlote Bronte, Charles Dickens, George Eliot and several other novelists used the autobiographical format for writing fiction.[11] But autobiographical novel is a distinct genre from self-confessed autobiography a term that I shall attempt to define for the purposes of this study.

Defining autobiography is not easy because today's definition might get changed tomorrow because of shifting priorities in literature and society. Some literary critics even discourage definition saying that any definition of autobiography either on the basis of inflexible stylistic or compositional criteria is unable to encompass the processes of historical development and change. Since the very objective of this chapter is to study autobiographies with reference to their themes and structure, continuity and change, it is, therefore, necessary to attempt to state here what we mean by autobiography.

The term 'autobiography' was put in circulation for the first time by Robert Southey in the *Quarterly Review* in 1809.[12] Definitely, even prior to 1809 autobiographies were

available in the market. Southey's term referred to works written by people about their personal lives. He, however, did not include diaries, journals and collection of letters in his definition because they were different genres of writing both in terms of theme as well as structure. Since then several definitions of autobiography have been offered by literary critics. The most befitting one, perhaps, comes from Philippe Lejeune, a French critic who defines autobiography as "Retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality".[13] Lejeune, thus, brings four main elements into the definitions of autobiography: prose as the medium; real life as the subject matter; author as the narrator and retrospective as the point of view. This is basically a prescriptive definition of autobiography and Lejeune is suggesting some boundary lines to be followed while writing one's autobiography.[14]

But, by going through a number of autobiographies one can easily see that all texts do not always follow the guidelines as proposed by Lejeune. They are diverse in terms of their themes and structures and demand a complex reading. However, there are literary critics who differentiate between a 'good' and 'bad' autobiography. Estelle Jelinek, for example prescribes that a good autobiography should have the following qualities: it must centre exclusively or mostly on the author, not on others; it should be representative of its times, a mirror of the predominant zeitgeist; the autobiographer should be self-aware, a seeker after self-knowledge; he/she must aim to explore, not to exhort; and his/her autobiography should be an effort to give meaning to some personal mythos, etc.[15]

Jelinek's effort to define what is a 'good' and 'bad' autobiography is not necessarily an attempt to homogenize the entire gamut of autobiographies into two groups. The fact that there are differences at the socio-philosophical experiences of the autobiographers make their autobiographies different from one another. Thus different aspects of autobiographies, over the years, have generated different responses in the autobiographical criticism. A critic like James Olney, for example, brings our attention towards the shift in the autobiographical study saying that in recent years more and more focus is on auto i.e. self rather than bio i.e. life,

> Much of the early criticism of the autobiographical mode was directed to the question of autos – how the act of autobiography is at once a discovery, a creation, and an imitation of the self (it was on the issue that Gusdorf's two essays and my own book crossed paths so frequently). Here I think we come at one of the most important explanations for the critical turn toward autobiography as literature, for those critics who took autos for their primary focus tended to be very free in their understanding of bios, seeing it as the entire life of the individual up to the time of

> writing, the psychic configuration of the individual at the moment of writing, the whole history of a people living in this individual autobiographer, or any combination of these and various other possible senses of bios. This shift of attention from bios to autos – from the life to the self – was, I believe, largely responsible for opening things up and turning them in a philosophical, psychological, and literary direction.[16]

In the context of studying the marginalised self of Dalit men and women and their asserting voices through their autobiographical narratives, it is, perhaps, not just sufficient to deal with the autos and the bios as Olney suggests; it is also equally important to see the act of writing and the social conditioning of this act. Several questions can be asked in this context. For example, what do the autobiographers write in their autobiographies? How do they select their material from the infinite choices each life throws up? Shall we take what they say at face value? For whom do they write? Keeping these questions in mind this chapter critically looks into *Confessions* of St. Augustine and Rousseau and *Autobiography* of Benjamin Franklin and J. S. Mill in the following pages.

III

Saint Augustine's Confessions

Writing about the process of conversion in Augustine's life John Sturrock, the celebrated author of the book *The Language of Autobiography* writes,

> A human life can be brought to display a meaning only on condition of being turned into a story; once subject to the public order of narrative, it acquires both the gravity of a settled and venerable literary form, and the orientation of hindsight which alone raises the past from an aimless sum of reminiscence into a personal history. If we crave significance for ourselves as historical beings, we can have it only by an intelligent and sequential ordering of what we retain or can recover of our past – in which the autobiographer was a model for us all. A life storied is a life made meaningful, and any life, however vapid, is at least storiable. I begin therefore from the assumption that whoever narrates his or her life was willing its transformation from a lived farrago into a thought whole.[17]

St. Augustine, true to Strurrock's observation, creates history by writing his life-story in the form of a confession and giving us a new literary form, which later develops into autobiography. Augustine's writing of his life-story also suggests that there is an emergence of self, which is under critical scrutiny. Though, throughout the *Confessions* Augustine invokes God and asks for His merciful forgiveness for his past sinful acts, there remains a heightened awareness of self, which is still ordinary and humane. It is, perhaps, in this

context, Roy Pascal in his famous book, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* notes that with the coming of Augustine's *Confessions* European civilization witnessed "the coming-into-being of a new concept of human personality."[18]

Augustine (354-430 A.D.) after becoming the bishop of Hippo, in North Africa began work on the *Confessions* when he was in his early forties. In the year 386 he resigned from the post of professor of rhetoric which he was holding for quite sometime at the imperial capital Milan. He was then baptised by the bishop Ambrose of Milan and then he returned to his family home at Thagaste, a small town in North Africa, not far to the west of Carthage and some fifty miles south of the Mediterranean to lead a life of prayer and study with a group of friends. Dedicating his full time for the cause of Christianity through deliberation and discourse Augustine within no time earned reputation as an orator and ascetic. It was during this time that he got an offer to become the bishop of Hippo. Accepting the offer in 396 he continued as bishop until his death in 430. The fact that the *Confessions* was written while Augustine was a bishop assumes significance because of the outpourings of his agonised Christian self.

Augustine divides the *Confessions* into thirteen main parts which he calls Books. Each Book is further divided into chapters. Books from I to X contain various phases of his personal life. This autobiographical part can be further divided into three sections based on the commonality of the topics. For example, the first section (Book I to IV) deals with Augustine's childhood and youth and his growing consciousness; the second section (Books V-IX) portrays Augustine as a public man leading up to his conversion; the third section (Book X) describes Augustine's religious engagements after his conversion. Finally, Books XI-XIII, though are independent pieces, can be read collectively as highly rhetorical Christian philosophical discourse. Thus, Augustine's *Confessions* both in theme and structure is a work conceived in an ambitious scale and is also first of its kind to have created "from the author's original outlook on life and the world", as Georg Misch puts it.[19]

Why did Augustine write the confessions? It is difficult to get an exact answer to this question because it has multiple bearings on the author in relation to his time and society. To begin with, Augustine's *Confessions* seems to be an apologia. Probably, Augustine, at a certain point of time realised the misdeeds of his past and undertook his vow before God not to repeat the same in future. The fact that Augustine ventured to write the *Confessions* only

after his conversion also corroborates this view. 'Confession' in common usage is 'an acknowledgement'. It is well known that Christians use confession as a method both for the expiation of sins and for the acknowledgement of faith in God. Thus, a confessor is someone who is honoured for having declared his or her faith at the risk of martydom, even though he or she does not, in fact, die a martyr. Further, acknowledgement of faith in God becomes praise of God's greatness and goodness, even in the basic acknowledgement, 'Jesus is Lord'. The opening paragraph of Augustine's *Confessions* i.e. "Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and of Thy wisdom there is no end" (p.3) - makes it clear that the author was very much conscious of his sin and believed that it was God who would come to his rescue. He had full faith in God and therefore he sought his blessings.

However, the significance of Augustine's *Confessions* lies not in his personal encounter with his Christian God, but an evolvement of his Christian self. It was truly astonishing that Augustine without hesitation makes his personal story available to the public with comprehensive details. This is the novelty of his confession. Before Augustine's confessional literature, autobiographical fragments did exist, but one does not find a sustained personal life-story. What is important about Augustine's *Confessions* is also that through his writing Augustine is trying to assert his individual identity and setting a trend for the followers of Christianity to do the same. After examining the Christian self of Augustine, Sayre has the following observation to make,

> What must be stressed, then, is that the magnificent and original form of St. Augustine's *Confessions* depends upon his identity as a Christian. In the ruin of the decaying Roman Empire he found beliefs which enabled him to put his life in order and show its meaning. It was a compelling discovery. It was a very new one. Augustine might be said to have addressed himself to God because until then there had been no other audience for such a remarkable story. But by speaking also to "my fellow citizens, and fellow pilgrims: both those that are gone before, and those that are to follow after me, and those too that accompany me along in this life", he helped others to receive the special organizing Christian identity and thus make the form a convention and perpetuate it.[20]

Sayre is right in his observation because, as historians tell us, chaos reigned over entire third century in Graeco-Roman and other empires, as a result one can see the manifold forces of disintegration in political, economic and cultural fields. Christianity, being a comparatively new creed had to really face the challenges to establish itself in this environment. It may be a co-incidence that the timely arrival of Augustine in the period of chaos saved Christianity and his devotion to duty helped establish Christianity as a full-

fledged religion. Thus, Augustine's contribution to Christianity is as great as his contribution towards autobiography.[21]

As mentioned earlier, Augustine's *Confessions* starts with praise to his Great Lord with a greater detail of His capacities to make every sinner's life 'beautiful'. In fact, the entire Book One is full of praises to God except where Augustine talks about his infancy and boyhood. It is interesting to note that till Book Nine he never took the name of his parents. It is only after his mother's death that Augustine remembers the great spirited lady Monica, his mother, and praises her domestic virtue and piety. He also remembers his pagan father Patricius only to compare him with his pious mother from whom he inherited religiosity and became a great preacher of Christianity. Thus throughout *Confessions* Augustine seems to be obsessed with sin, religion and above all, God. This neglected treatment of his parents makes Augustine face criticism from Georg Misch who comments, "Life begins not with father and mother but with God and sin." [22]

Augustine's obsession with his sin and devotion towards God is obvious. As it seems, Augustine's God is, though always written in capital 'g', not the Mystic One Who is beyond reach. Instead, He is always approachable like an intimate friend. Augustine, under much pressure of his guilty conscience because of sins he had committed under Christian law thus confides everything to his God, who he believes, will rescue him from his downfall. This approach of Augustine shows the influence of the general philosophy of his time and society, which believed that the supreme goodness of God would surely be bestowed on man for whom the world had been made. [23]

By taking God's name in each and every act, Augustine certainly does not mystify his day-to-day experiences. He describes in plain and simple manner, his relationship with his family, friends and fellow human beings and gratefully acknowledges their emotional and psychological help over his mind. Thus he relates his 'self' with others and tries to judge his day-to-day activities. While judging his act Augustine sets a universal standard of measurement and believes that whatever happens to him can happen to anybody in any part of the world. He realises that 'truth' is invincible and it will be the same for one and all. He also believes that God is truthful and surrendering before God is the only way for the mankind to attain 'truth'; otherwise there is damnation. Being fully convinced in this

proposition he proceeds to confess his sinful acts before God by saying, "For before Thee none is free from sin, not even the infant which has lived but a day upon the earth."(p.8)

Broadly speaking, there are two Augustines throughout *Confessions*: the protagonist Augustine who continues to commit sins till his conversion and the narrator Augustine who gives a respectable life to the protagonist by writing his life-story. As such, Augustine has nothing much to say about his childhood days except for a couple of interesting episodes which he thinks, helped him to build up his social conscience. In his boyhood days, he recollects, how he indulged more in games with his classmates than in study. Augustine comes to a realisation that playing instead of studying is a sin and hence he feels sorry about it. And he writes about it, "we sinned, in writing, or reading, or reflecting upon our lessons less than was required of us"(p.10). But, in spite of such indulgences during his school days Augustine turned out to be a brilliant boy showing interest in Latin and his native Punic language. But, from the very beginning he had an aversion for the Greek language. After he finished his elementary education in Tagaste, his parents sent him to the advanced schools in Madaura, a centre of pagan culture some miles south of Tagaste.

Augustine joined in the advanced schools when he was about twelve and received his first broad grounding in Latin literature and thought. He spent four years in these advanced schools and came out as a successful candidate at the end. It was during this time that Augustine committed further sin by stealing both cash and kind from his parents' cellar and table. Interestingly, Augustine confesses that he continued to enjoy committing such evil acts including cheatings on his friends in games. In the following passage he gives details about his perception of these events,

> Pilferings I committed from my parents' cellar and table, either enslaved by gluttony, or that I might have something to give to boys who sold me their play, who, though they sold it, liked it as well as I. In this play, likewise, I often sought dishonest victories, I myself being conquered by the vain desire of pre-eminence. And what could I so little endure, or, if I detected it, censured I so violently, as the very things I did to others, and when myself detected I was censured, preferred rather to quarrel than to yield? Is this the innocence of childhood? Nay, Lord, nay. Lord, I entreat Thy mercy, O my God. For these same sins, as we grow older, are transferred from governors and masters, from nuts, and balls, and sparrows, to magistrates and kings, to gold, and lands, and slaves, just as the rod was succeeded by more severe chastisements. (p.18)

Augustine further indulged in more 'sinful' acts during his growing age. After passing out from the advanced schools Augustine failed to pursue his higher study because his poor parents falling short of financial arrangements were unable to send him to any educational institution. It was during this spare time that Augustine, an adolescent boy of sixteen now prematurely engaged in lustful pleasures and theft with his companions. In later years he remembers the dissolute passions in which he had been involved then and in mature words registers his grief which comes yet another form of confession,

> But what was it that I delighted in save to love and to be loved? But I held it not in moderation, mind to mind, the bright path of friendship, but out of the dark concupiscence of the flesh and the effervescence of youth exhalations came forth which obscured and overcast my heart, so that I was unable to discern pure affection from unholy desire. Both boiled confusedly within me, and dragged away my unstable youth into the rough placed of unchaste desires, and plunged me into a gulf of infamy. Thy anger had overshadowed me, and I knew it not. I became deaf by the rattling of the chains of my mortality, the punishment for my soul's pride; and I wandered farther from Thee, and Thou dids't suffer me; and I was tossed to and fro, and wasted, and poured out, and boiled over in my fornications, and Thou dids't hold Thy peace, O Thou my tardy joy! Thou then dids't hold Thy peace, and I wandered still farther from Thee, into more and more barren seed-plots of sorrows, with proud dejection and restless lassitude. (pp. 20-21)

It was Augustine's mother Monica who, observing her son's falls into disgraceful acts admonished him to preserve his purity and tried hard for his baptism. But as it seems, Augustine was not yet ready for the reformation. That's why, perhaps, what follow for the next many pages of the *Confessions* are the descriptions after descriptions of Augustine's sins. The acts include: more thefts, more sexual perversions, and of course, his falling in the lines of the Manicheans during his three years study at Carthage between his seventeenth and nineteenth years. Though he got carried away by the beliefs of the Manicheans for quite sometime – till he was twenty-nine - Augustine's deep study of philosophy finally helped him to come to terms with himself. He discovered the fallacies of the Manicheans and left them to themselves and then seriously professed the knowledge of God, which he had earlier mocked at. He got a chance to visit Rome, studied more and more philosophy there and became a teacher of rhetoric first in Rome and then in Milan. It was during this time that he came across Ambrose, the bishop at Milan. Getting influenced by the Catholic doctrines from Ambrose, Augustine regulated his life and embraced the Catholic faith. Augustine got baptised and became a Christian at the age of thirty-three.

Soon after Augustine's conversion to Christianity Monica died seeing her son baptised. Augustine's pagan father Patricius had died earlier. After the death of his parents Augustine was alone in the world, nobody to call his own, though on one or two occasions he casually refers to his brother and sister without mentioning their names.[24] The influence of his mother in Augustine's life was definitely great because she was the one who brought Augustine from youthful disaster to graceful social rehabilitation by sending him for higher education and making him a devout Christian. Most importantly, she devoted her entire enterprise for Augustine thinking that he would be, one day, known by his fellow human beings as a 'good soul'. Monica's death brought a great vacuum in Augustine's life. In an emotionally charged state Augustine writes her obituary, which shows how close he was to her. Augustine recollects his mother in the following manner,

> What, then, was that which did grievously pain me within, but the newly-made wound, from having that most sweet and dear habit of living together suddenly broken off? I was full of joy indeed her testimony, when, in her last illness, flattering my dutifulness, she called me kind, and recalled, with great affection of love, that she had never heard any harsh or reproachful sound come out of my mouth against her. But yet, O my God, who madest us, how can the honor which I paid to her be compared with her slavery for me? As, then, I was left destitute of so great comfort in her, my soul was stricken, and that life torn apart as it were, which, of hers and mine together, had been made but one. (p.143)

Soon after Monica's death Augustine settled down in Rome after marrying a woman whose name he never mentions. Earlier, with the prior approval of his mother Augustine had a mistress who later quit him because of his ill treatment of her. After staying about two years in Rome Augustine returned to Tagaste, his home town and set up a monastery to devote himself full time to preaching Christianity. His service to Catholicism was soon recognized and he got ordained as a priest of the community of Hippo Regius in 391. Four years later he became auxiliary Bishop of the same community, and upon the death of the Bishop, Valerius, he succeeded to the charge of the diocese. Thus, being the head of the Catholic Church his time and energy were fully devoted for the propagation of his religion, which he duly discharged with dignity and equanimity. Very soon Augustine proved himself to be an indefatigable preacher, a successful diocesan administrator, a writer of letters[25] and above all, a thinker.[26] Among many of his treaties *On the Trinity* (416) and *the City of God* (413-426) are known to be the immortal masterpieces. As a thinker he minutely studied the Holy Scriptures and rigorously interpreted them thus earning the glory of one of the most powerful exegetes in the history of the Church.

From Book-IX to Book-XIII in the *Confessions* Augustine mostly dwells on the topics related to Christianity and forwards his philosophical commentaries. Though every passage of his treaties is addressed to God, any sensible reader will understand that by pronouncing on sin, confession and redemption Augustine expects every individual to be true to oneself before becoming a true servant of God. This philosophical aspiration of Augustine makes him relevant to the human world for all time despite his specific religio-cultural background in a particular historic time, observes Etinne Gilson:

> If we reduce St. Augustine to his essence along – and as such he does not belong to any race or age – he is man in his yearning to be self-sufficient and in his ability to do without God. If it is true that his philosophy is, in Windelband's excellent phrase, a "metaphysics of inner experience", we should add that the inner experience is precisely the experience of this ambition and its failure. His doctrine is this and, fundamentally, nothing more, but since the obscure forces which gave rise to the struggle it had to tell are to be found in every one of us. This is the source of its extraordinary individuality and universality.[27]

The extraordinary individuality that emerges from Augustine's *Confessions* creates a history of its own when the confessional mode of writing gave birth to a tradition of writing autobiography in the later period. As already mentioned, after Augustine's *Confessions* several preachers and religious heads attempted to write their spiritual autobiographies describing their religious lives either fully or partly. But, it is important that the modern autobiography in its secular form had to come from Rousseau, once again in the form of a confession, a legacy which Augustine so dearly loved and gifted to the world.

IV

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*

The confessional mode underwent several changes after Augustine. The most significant change that we immediately witness is from spiritual mode to secular one where the emphasis is more on the day to day worldly sins than the religious doctrines which dictated one's personal life. This emphasis, of course, due to the changes that the western societies witnessed after going through what is now called Enlightenment. Thus, if there is a marked difference in the presentation of self between Augustine and Rousseau in their respective *Confessions* it is because of certain priorities that the society and time demanded then. Rousseau who came more than a millennium later after Augustine must have witnessed several changes in the fields of polity, economy, religion and literature. Therefore studying the societal transformation as well as literary articulation through their respective personal

narratives is not a simple and smooth one. Robert Elbaz gives us a comprehensive view of this change,

> Autobiography is non-existent in primitive societies nor is it found in societies of non-bourgeois ideology. It is a product of the discourse of modernism. The question that must be asked at this point is whether autobiographic discourse undergoes breaking points, or shifts, in its development. Can one speak of a rupture in the discourse towards the middle of the eighteenth century, or is it just an imbrication of new ideas upon the old? Is it a displacement of the same concepts? Is the partial subjectivity that Augustine advances the same we encounter in Rousseau, or is it a different one altogether? For it is clear that despite the loosening of the church's hold over everyday life, religion remains the shaping force of the mental structures, at least until the Enlightenment. Are the ideological commonalities of both confessional and secular autobiographies wide enough to put aside any notion of discursive ruptures? Can one merely say that confessional autobiographies equal the secular one plus the active presence of God? On one hand, the preoccupations of eighteenth century man differ widely from those of the Middle Ages, but on the other, the qualities of God – His intellect, eternity, consistency, homogeneity, uniqueness and irreducibility – are now invested in man.[28]

In order to answer the questions raised above by Elbaz let us look into Rousseau's *Confessions*, which bears the stamp of Enlightenment in several ways.

Rousseau's *Confessions* is broadly divided into two parts with twelve different sections knitted together and each individual chapter is called a 'Book'. To summerise briefly, Books 1 to 4 mostly dwell on Rousseau's childhood and adolescent experiences detailing his fancies and frailty. Books 5 to 6 describe him in good light as a young man who after realizing his past misdeeds tries to amend his life. But in Books 7 to 8 the young man falls again into disgrace, and he partially recovers in Book 9. But then follow disaster after disaster as described in Books 10 to 11 from which Rousseau hardly recovers until he completes his last Book 12. Thus, Rousseau's *Confessions* is all about his decline and fall. Peter France explains such a phenomenon thus:

> Driven by his destiny, the innocent hero is gradually stripped of his illusions, expelled from his native place, corrupted by his experiences, frustrated in love, disappointed by friends, and finally exiled and driven from place to place in solitary suffering. Alternatively, the book can be seen as a succession of losses followed by partial recoveries, followed in their turn by further losses.[29]

Rousseau's *Confessions* is much more than just the decline and fall of a personality. Firstly, by stating at the very beginning of the book that, "This is the only portrait of a man, painted exactly according to nature and in all its truth, that exists and probably ever exist", (p.3) Rousseau is raising some important points not just about his individual life but also

about the society he belonged to. As commonly understood, Rousseau's was an enlightened self. Being conscious that he was a true representative of his age, Rousseau, "divides, and then sees opposition between, head and heart; reason and emotion; nature and society; self and society; country and city; and self and nature."[30] Living in between the worlds of duality Rousseau tried to bring a balance between his private self and public spirit. Secondly, by writing his life-story Rousseau was also earnestly engaged in doing, at least, two important jobs, i.e. documenting the emergence of a modern individuality in him and defining his 'self'. Like Saint Augustine though Rousseau also addressed his confessions to God, to judge his activities, he at the same time asked his fellow men to scrutinise his character and study him in the light of their own experiences. This particular attitude, perhaps, makes Rousseau's *Confessions* secular. He was also ready for a scrutiny of his 'self' when he requested his reader not to spare him if his narrative lacked credibility. Rousseau thus writes,

> If I were to take it upon myself to draw conclusions from all this and to say to my reader, 'Such is my character', he might think, if not that I am deceiving him, then at least that I am deceiving myself. But in setting out for him, with total simplicity, everything I have thought, everything I have felt, I cannot, except by design, lead him astray; and even if this were my design, I would not easily achieve it by these means. It is for the reader to assemble all these elements and to determine the being that they constitute; the result must be his own work, so that if he is mistaken, all the error is on his side. Now, if I am to achieve this, it is not enough for my account to be faithful, it must also be precise. It is not for me to judge the importance of the facts, I must simply relate them all and leave to him the task of choosing among them. It is to this end that I have so far devoted all my efforts.... (p.170)

Thus, the efforts made to write the *Confessions* does not go waste; rather it makes Rousseau the originator of a new genre of literature. Interestingly, Rousseau was aware of the fact that his endeavour to write about himself with scrutiny and self-criticism had no precedence when he writes at the beginning of the Book One, "I am resolved on an undertaking that had no model and will have no imitator."(p.5) Surely, the way Rousseau put his personal life in details, that too in secular terms, it had no 'model' in the history of autobiographical writings. But there were imitators, so many that Rousseau's original ideas continued to be recycled repeatedly over the years. Whenever there is any secular credential found in the present day's autobiographies the credit goes to Rousseau.

Rousseau begins his *Confessions* humbly. From his account it is very clear that Rousseau was a Genevan and not a Frenchman as most of us know him to be, because during eighteenth century Geneva was an independent republic headed by a monarch. Later, of

course, it became a part of France. Born into a family of watchmakers Rousseau belonged to the middle rank of the bourgeoisie and always associated himself with the common citizens even if he became a member of the General Council, the highest legislative body of the country. His parents Issac Rousseau and Suzanne Bernard had a large family of fifteen children but with a modest living. Thus, from the very beginning of his childhood Rousseau had to work hard and support himself, as the family support was always meagre. Rousseau, due to his sheer efforts, became a great writer and a renowned philosopher of the enlightenment era.[31] But he continued to live a simple life having no pretension of being 'great'.

We learn from his life-story that Rousseau did not have a house of his own till close to the end of his life and always stayed in the houses of his friends and patrons who provided for his accommodation freely, as a gesture of good will. Thus, Rousseau's was a heart-rending tale when he tells us about his miserable days fighting against all odds including hunger. Rousseau, never had steady source of income. As a professional writer he barely earned money to meet both ends. The creative excellence he had, had hardly been encouraged – not to speak of being recognized because every time he wrote something there was always a controversy. His major work *Emile* (1762), for example, made him an exile. And to avoid arrest Rousseau left Geneva for Paris. But this was a great setback in his life and career, which he never forgot till the end of his life. Recollecting this event, Rousseau at the end of Book One writes about his nationalistic feeling in a sad tone. He recollects,

> I could have spent, in the bosom of my religion, my fatherland, my family and friends, a peaceful and pleasant life such as my temperament required, sustained by regular and congenial work and by a society after my own heart. I could have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father, a good friend, a good worker, a good man in all ways. I could have been content with my condition; I might even, perhaps, have brought honour to it, and after a life that was simple and obscure, but even and sweet, have died peacefully in the bosom of my own kind. Soon forgotten no doubt, I would at least have been mourned for as long as I was remembered. (pp. 42-43)

Apart from his difficult childhood Rousseau's experiences of stealing, telling lies, prattling, etc. get highlighted in his narrative as a part of 'development of self'. By narrating such events Rousseau had an agenda to pursue. We have seen in St. Augustine's *Confessions* the details of his 'bad' childhood experiences, which included stealing, blackmailing and indulging in sex to show in contrast to 'a good spirited reformed Christian' in his adult age. Augustine's reformist agenda automatically got a 'religious' colour through his advocacy of

conversion to Christianity. Unlike Augustine, Rousseau's agenda was more 'secular' than religious, not just because Rousseau was not a religious man like Augustine; but because the rationalisation of a guilty conscience came in such a way that anybody can share his predicament. In other words, Rousseau never anticipated a 'good' life after acknowledgement of several of his 'evil' deeds. While writing about his misdemeanours Rousseau admits that he stole fruits, sweets or other things to eat and satisfy his hunger, never to make fun or harm or damage others. Thus, his every misdeed, as he explains, was due to poor socio-economic conditions and not for any other reason. By writing this he wanted to prove that a person's behaviour was centred around his immediate environment. He also attributed people's behaviour to their general conditions. He, thus, never justified his malevolent act. Rather condemning the bad acts he tried to capture the true spirit of a 'social' being who was a natural heir to his 'social' domain. The following passage emphatically makes this point clear,

> And so I learned to covet in silence, to hide, to dissemble, to lie, and even to steal, a vagary which it had never before occurred to me to indulge, and of which of have never quite been able to cure myself since. This is where envy combined with powerlessness always leads. This is why all servants are pilferers and all apprentices are likely to be; although, in a state of peace and equality, where everything they see within their reach, the latter lose this shameful propensity as they grow up. Not having had this same advantage, I have not been able to derive the same benefit from it. (p.31)

Having lost his mother when he was an infant Rousseau owed his 'virtuous' life to his father and near relations, especially his aunts. He describes his father as "a man of strict honour, but very religious too"(p.60), and gratefully acknowledges his influence on him. His allegiance to the other members of his family was no less when he writes, "I had been offered nothing but lessons in virtue and examples of probity by all of my relations"(Ibid). Of course, Rousseau did not have a fixed religious affiliation throughout his life for he changed his religious beliefs for reasons best known to him. For instance, he became a Catholic convert in 1728 when he left Geneva to settle down in Turin. But when he came back to Geneva as a citizen in 1754 he became a Protestant both in his faith and practice. A few years later he started talking about the 'natural religion' of man, which is better known today as deism. The natural religion or deism as Rousseau believed in his time was "a rationally based faith in an all-powerful, intelligent and benevolent creator, and one, which had no place for revelation."[32] By advocating such a new creed, Rousseau not only questioned the orthodox practices of the Church, he also strongly advocated the reform measures, which were required

then. As expected, both the Catholic Church and the ministers of Geneva condemned Rousseau's creed calling it unorthodox and unwanted. Interestingly, in spite of his virulent attack on the Church, Rousseau continued to portray himself a Christian through out his life. This was, perhaps, to compromise with his general life situations which otherwise had many ebbs and flows.

Deism, as we understand today, was a part of the call given by all the preachers of the Enlightenment to establish civil society against the feudal social order. The French Enlightenment mainly initiated and carried forward by Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu aimed at achieving such a noble objective. Throughout the eighteenth century France was under absolute monarchy and it was difficult to break the traditional power structure easily. But, the French Revolution of 1789 made way towards achieving this goal. Though Rousseau was not available to witness the Revolution, it is generally believed that his radical writings helped awake people who actively participated in the revolution. Due to his intellectual leadership, he is sometime called the father of the French Revolution.

Though on the professional front - whether as a writer or philosopher – Rousseau was a great achiever, in personal life he seemed always a loser, especially in terms of friendship and material well-being. Being a great socialite of his time, he easily made friends – in fact several at time – but disowned them sooner or later over certain trivial matters. Even though he never owned a house, he was always generously provided for by his friends. His other material possessions - not too many because Rousseau's life was simple - were also contributed by his friends. Thus, when Rousseau disowned his friends he also lost his material possessions. There are instances when Rousseau had no alternative but to accept his misfortune, which included going without proper shelter and food for days together. Though this plight was the saddest part of his life, he did not feel ashamed to narrate it in his characteristic details. Rousseau thus writes page after page about his friendship with Madame de Warens, Madame d' Epinay, Diderot and Grimm – to name a few – and their 'betrayal'. In spite of Rousseau's showing guns at his friends–turned–foes he was not always a man of blind prejudice because he could also critically evaluate his position and pass judgement on himself. This is definitely a rare quality, which is not found in many autobiographies. The following passage is an example of Rousseau's self-reflexivity:

> Naturally quick-tempered, I have felt anger, fury even, as my first impulse; but the desire for vengeance has never taken root within me. I am too little preoccupied

> with the offence to be much preoccupied with the offender.... The pardoning of offences is forever being preached to us. It is without doubt a very fine virtue, but not one of which I can make any use. I do not know if my heart could overcome its hatred, for it has never felt any, and I think about my enemies too little to possess the merit of having pardoned them. I will not say to what extent, through tormenting me, they torment themselves. I am at their mercy, they have all the power, it is they who wield it. Only one thing is beyond their power, which I defy them ever to achieve: which is that, in tormenting themselves over me, they should force me to torment myself over them. (p.573)

In spite of being a sufferer for his friendships Rousseau never stopped making new friends and as a result he had more enemies than friends over the years. His friendship with David Hume (1711-76 A.D.), the Scottish philosopher is quite well known. This friendship came at a time when Rousseau's life was under threat. So when an offer came from Hume he tried to settle down at Wootton in Derbyshire, England. But, this friendship also did not last long. Even though Rousseau never mentioned this in his autobiography, he apparently wrote a dramatic letter accusing Hume of treachery and finally left England in the spring of 1767. Thereafter, it seems, Rousseau led a miserable life. He took refuge under a false name in the chateau of the Marquis de Mirabeau at Trye on the edge of Normandy. He then left for the Grenoble region and temporarily settled down in the vicinity of the small town of Bourgoin. It was here that in 1768 he unofficially married Therese Levassear with whom he had been living for past twenty-three years. In 1770 he came back to Paris defying the counsels' order and earned his livelihood while reading the second part of his *Confessions* to the public. He was forbidden by the authorities to give public readings, an injunction Rousseau had to abide by. It is interesting to note that Rousseau in one of his public readings underlined the very objective of telling his life-story, which can be termed as 'autobiographical truth'. To quote Rousseau:

> I have told the truth. If anyone knows things that are contrary to what I have just set out, should they be proved a thousand times over, he knows lies and deceits, and if he refuses to explore and to clarify them with me while I am alive, he loves neither justice nor truth. As for me, I hereby declare publicly and without fear: that anyone who, without even having read my writings, examines with his own eyes my nature, my character, my morals, my inclinations, my pleasures, my habits, and can think me a dishonourable man, is himself a man ought to be choked. (p.642)

Rousseau's challenge to his reader that his autobiographical account is nothing but full of 'truth' is definitely a bold step. This position of Rousseau underlines the role of an autobiographer who should be always truthful. However, there are critics who do not agree

with him at this point. One such critic is Stephen Spender who condemns him in the strongest terms saying that there is hardly any 'truth' in what he writes in his autobiography,

> And of course Rousseau does not tell the truth. There is a lie concealed within his very method. For to say to oneself: "If I tell the worst about myself I shall only reveal that I am no worse than other men" is dishonest. First, some men are better than others. Second, by the worst one means worst, and it is degrading to comfort oneself by attempting to prove that others are as bad as one's own worst. Third, there is the real possibility that Rousseau really might be worse than other people: there is the possibility of real moral solitude, and this is precisely what Rousseau cannot face. Perhaps the worst is the refusal to face this. Everyone is a liar about certain things. There are crimes to which we confess because they secretly flatter our sense of our own strength. But no one confesses to meanness, cowardice, vanity, pettiness: or at least not unless he is assured that his crime, instead of excluding him from humanity, brings him back into the moral field.[33]

Spender's view seems to be too general and hence it does not capture the true spirit of Rousseau's confessions in their right perspective. More importantly, it does not acknowledge Rousseau's first hand attempt to secularise the religious realms of life and construct a world of his own to be lived and experienced by none other than Rousseau himself. In fact, such a view forwarded by Spender and others be seen countered in Rousseau's autobiography itself or at least, Peter France believes so. By articulating the issues of his tension-ridden self Rousseau is at his best and that's why the *Confessions* is an important text, observes France:

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> Rousseau's frankness, whatever its psychological origins, opens the doors on dark areas of life which most previous (and many subsequent) writers preferred to shroud in dignified silence. *The Confessions*, in fact, illuminate not so much the public life as all that is private and secret. No doubt Plutarch and Montaigne were powerful aids to Rousseau as he explored this treacherous terra incognita, but even more than they – and in spite of his self-deception and myth-making – he presses on his readers the absorbing interest of the self, his individual self, the self that manifests itself so unmistakably in the writing. This concentration on the self (so different from the unreflecting 'love of self' of Rousseau's natural man) had been regarded by many as morbid and dangerous, the sign of a sick society, the source of all kinds of miseries. Conversely it has been seen as the proper recognition of the value of the individual personality, considered no longer in relation to God, but as the supreme source of value in human life. In any case, for better or worse, the period between about 1750 and 1800 was marked in Western European literature by an extraordinary shift of emphasis from the work of art as aesthetic creation to the work of art as expression of the writer's inner being. In this movement the *Confessions* were an essential text.[34]

Thus, Rousseau's text is essentially a path-breaker in the history of autobiographical narrative.

V

Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*

Rousseau's secular Confessions has influenced over the years many public figures across the world to write their life-stories. Though there is no evidence that Benjamin Franklin was inspired by Rousseau to write his *Autobiography*, it is commonly understood that Franklin being a voracious reader must have come across quite a number of confessional literature before penning down his life-story. Of course, Franklin's *Autobiography,* both in its structure and contents was a departure from the confessional literature as well as the conventional autobiographies. Succinctly it is all about the rise of a poor man to the highest position in society. The position Franklin achieved as a public figure in American society was due to his ability to do hard work without compromising with his conscience. W. Macdonald, the editor of Franklin's *Autobiography* sums up the rare qualities found in Franklin's personality in the following passage:

> And we may say that if Franklin was always the right man in the right place, it was because, more than any man who ever moved through such a range of activity and experience, he was always the same man wherever he found himself. It is this which has made it seem worthwhile to linger thus over what was meant to be but a passing reference to the beginning of his career. For not to say that in the beginning of all things were, we may opine at least that Franklin's life affords an extraordinary example of the value of an unpretending disposition and an axiomatic mind; and that all his career seems, as we read it in greatest detail, but the matter-of fact consequence of being alive, and having a home like one's neighbour, and a business to attend to, and a city to care for and serve. That is why I have called him the greatest Citizen in modern history. (p.158)

That Franklin is a rich, rare and varied personality is a well-known fact. And hence one does not know how to construct his identity while classifying his occupations, which are too many at time: clergyman, seaman, tallow chandler and soap boiler, printer, poet, swimming instructor and merchant. Thus, it is not so easy to properly understand Franklin without dichotomizing his private self vis-à-vis his public life. This makes it imperative to study his autobiography closely.

Broadly speaking, Franklin's *Autobiography* lacks a compact structure. It has four different parts written over nineteen years at different places loosely connected with one another. For instance, Franklin started writing the first part in August 1771, while staying at

the home of his friend Bishop Shipley near Twyford in Hampshire, England. This part basically captures his early years in Boston, when he was preoccupied in Philadelphia, his adventures in London and his marriage to Debbie Read in 1730. He was unable to write the second part soon, not until 1784 at his home in Passy, outside Paris, by when the revolution for America's independence had been over and the treaty between America and England also had been signed. By the time he wrote his second part the first part was missing. Thus he had to entirely rely on his outline, which he had prepared it earlier and rewrote it with greater care and detail. In the meantime, he occupied the office of the president of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania, and became an active member of the Federal Convention. With these busy assignments he started the third part only after 1788. The fourth part which was a very brief account of his business at London was written shortly before his death, April 17, 1780. Thus, his is an incomplete autobiography.

Interestingly, Franklin used a letter form to write his autobiography. He addressed his son, William Franklin, the Governor of New Jersey as an audience to narrate his life-story. At the beginning of the first part he sets out the very objective of writing his autobiography by saying that having emerged from poverty and obscurity to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world of felicity, people might find his life interesting and imitate him. He also sees the need for celebrating 'vanity' in his autobiography because, as he believed, it had helped him to achieve whatever he wanted to be.

Even though Franklin celebrated his 'vanity' he never hid his humble family background. As he informs us, his grandfather Thomas inherited the smith's business from his great grandfather. Later Franklin's father Josiah became a tallow-chandler and soap-boiler with no much income to smoothly run a family of seventeen children from two wives. Franklin was the youngest child of the second wife Abiah Folger, and the first child in the family to go to the grammar school at the age of eight. All his elder brothers were apprentices to different trades from their adolescent days with a hope that they would add to the family income. The Franklin family, somehow, did not do well thereafter. As a result, at the age of ten Franklin had to be brought back home from the school to help his father in his small business. With this Franklin's formal education came to an end, though with his own efforts he continued to study and excelled both in writing and speaking. It is believed that Franklin had no rival as public orator, even if he himself denied that, saying, "I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subjects to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in

language"(p.83) etc. This is his humble way to place himself before the reader for a scrutiny of his personality. It is the same Franklin who later confessed that, "I should probably be proud of my humility"(Ibid).

However, for young Franklin life did not seem to be easy sailing as he tried to make both ends meet by himself having no support from his kith and kin. Thus by compulsion he became an apprentice at the age of sixteen in a small printing-house where his elder brother was working. Later this apprenticeship helped Franklin to go to New York, Boston and England in different assignments related to printing work and in all these places he proved his worth. Much later, he set up his own printing press and became a successful printer as well as publisher. But during his trying time life for Franklin was full of experiments as well as patience so far as the basic needs like food, clothes and other essential things are concerned. For example, Franklin tells us, during his apprenticeship in order to save money he prepared his own vegetarian and inexpensive dishes such as boiled potatoes or rice or hasty pudding, learning these items from a book, written by one Tryon. From the saved money he bought books and journals. While in England even in cold weather Franklin drank water while his co-workers, nearly fifty of them, were great guzzlers of beer, who chided him calling him "Water-American". Later, even if Franklin became a successful businessman he continued to live a simple and modest life. His experiments with life whether in terms of expenditure, temperance, morality or punctuality, thus continued till he breathed his last. Franklin explains in the following passage why he needed to be such a hard practitioner,

> Reading was the only amusement I allowed myself. I spent no item in taverns, games, or frolicks of any kind; and my industry in my business continued as indefatigable as it was necessary. I was indebted for my printing-house; I had a young family coming on to be educated, and I had to contend with for business two printers, who were established in the place before me. My circumstances, however, grew daily easier. My original habits of frugality continuing, and my father having, among his instructions to me when a boy, frequently repeated a proverb of Solomon, 'Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men', I from thence considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encouraged me, though I did not think that I should ever literally stand before kings, which, however had since happened; for I have stood before five, and even had the honour of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner. (p.71)

In spite of Franklin describing his simple life with all characteristic humility, critics have found in his narrative a sheer frustration of individuality and identity crisis. They believe that by writing his autobiography he tries to overcome his frustration through self-

love. One such critic is Robert F. Sayre, who, while bringing a comparison between Augustine and Franklin emphasises that even though the life situations of both these autobiographers were different their narrative motives are more or less the same. Both of them try to construct an identity of their own through their life-stories. To quote Sayre,

> The problem Franklin unconsciously illustrated was the problem of the man whose life and character was one of change and discontinuity. He was, as he delighted in telling, the Philadelphia printer who had dined with kings. There are certain fundamentals of his character, which were always the same, but they are by no means as prominent as the fundamental facts about Augustine's character, though his life had witnessed many revolutions and turnings about, too. With his paramount knowledge of himself as a new Christian, Augustine had a unifying and organizing identity. The chaos out of which he described himself as having emerged was a planned one; it was developed for the purpose of representing the disorder which he had already overcome. The Saint's pilgrimage had concluded in conversion, and the writer had undertaken the task not of completing the quest but of telling and explaining it. The scientist's life is in disorder right up to the time at which it is written. The pilgrimage is not complete. The writing of it becomes a kind of tentative completion, and the informing identity is discovered on the way...[35]

Sayre is partially right in his views because an autobiographer has two identities: before and after the completion of his/her autobiography. The act of writing autobiography gives the autobiographer a sense of identity, a kind of fulfillment in life. Franklin is no exception to this rule. It is rather significant that Franklin without any pretension tells us about the problematic sides of his life and his struggles to find a meaningful life, which he achieved later.

Franklin acknowledges the contributions made by his wife towards making a lovely and peaceful home. Such a benevolent gesture towards the fair sex is hardly to be found in men's autobiographies. For example, both Augustine and Rousseau in their *Confessions*, forget even to mention the presence of their wives in their lives. Franklin, however, pays rich tribute to his wife using rare words. He, for instance, writes,

> We have an English proverb that says, 'He that would thrive, must ask his wife'. It was lucky for me that I had one as much disposed to industry and frugality as myself. She assisted me cheerfully in my business, folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop, purchasing old linen rags for the paper-makers, etc., etc. We kept no idle servants, our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was a long time bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a two-penny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon. But mark how luxury will enter families, and make a progress, in spite of principle: being called one morning to breakfast, I found it in a China bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of

> three-and-twenty shillings, for which she had no other excuse or apology to make, but that she thought her husband deserved a silver spoon and China bowl as well as any of his neighbours. This was the first appearance of plate and China in our house, which afterward, in a course of years, as our wealth increased, augmented gradually to several hundred pounds in value. (pp. 71-72)

As mentioned earlier, due to his hard work Franklin became a successful printer and a renowned publisher. Once he became an established businessman his urge to do socially useful work knew no bounds. At the cost of his time and resources he became a self-styled scientist to render help to mankind by inventing a number of modern things, such as, stove, fertilizers, etc. His contributions for the successful achievement of American independence had no match in the history of freedom movement. This is clear when he led the committee to England on peace initiative when the American Revolution was in its peak. After the independence he became an elderly spokesman to put forth his country's concerns before the world in the right perspective. He also headed many committees after independence to participate in his country's growth.

Surprisingly, Franklin does not think it necessary to include in his autobiography all his achievements mentioned above. As a result, we do not know much about several other facets of Franklin. What we know from the autobiography is only about Franklin, the famous printer of Philadelphia who had a humble background or the story of a poor boy who became a notable citizen in American society. W. Macdonald in his introduction to Franklin's autobiography reveals the other aspects of Franklin:

> The *Autobiography* tells us much about a certain busy and notable and well-doing citizen of Philadelphia; and perhaps even of that civic character the dimensions are understated, by an effect of modesty in the chronicler of his doings. But it tells us nothing of a great and famous man of science; it tells us nothing of a reverent philosopher, of a man of massive wisdom, vast toleration, endless patience, inexhaustible courage and endurance, and matchless in security and counsel; nor anything of a man of so rare and full social qualities that there was no such companion as he, and the record of his friendships would almost fill a book. And as far a certain Great and Illustrious Franklin - the most famous patriot, the wisest statesman, the most successful diplomatist of his age, a man whose presence in the world filled the mind of his generation it does not afford us a hint that such an one ever existed.... (p. xv)

Macdonald, as it seems, is a great admirer of Franklin and hence he praises this great personality in uncritical words. However, a critic like Robert Sayre tries to find out the limits of Franklin's *Autobiography* and in the process throws a new light on Franklin's personality.

Sayre mostly concentrates on the subjects Franklin does not feel comfortable to talk about in his narrative and comes to a conclusion that Franklin's motive in his *Autobiography* is not just to narrate his individual self but the self of America, the new nation-in-making. Thus Franklin's autobiography is nothing but an advertisement for America. To quote Sayre:

> The limits of Franklin's *Autobiography* as biography nearly all stem from the shaping of the hero to this didactic national purpose. Because the portrait of the young Franklin is so convincing and because the man writing takes such evident pleasure in him, despite his "errata", it is hard to believe that the young Franklin was not pretty much as described - a precociously bright, ambitious lad who for a time wasted himself in satire, disputatiousness and occasional rowdiness and who then knuckled down to work hard, to thrive and to help others (except, of course, his competitors). But those who know the rest of his writing still know the distortion. The young man in the *Autobiography* was patently a boy's Franklin (full of malice towards little boys, Mark Twain pointedly said); the young Franklin's way with his girls and the adult Franklin's way with girls, women, and other men was scarcely mentioned. His love of learning, travel, and leisure enters mostly as the reward of early industry. His cultivated eighteenth-century playfulness and his cunning opportunism are enough present, however, to make us wonder whether he is not at times, satirizing himself so as to let readers know that he regrets the omissions, the limits of his own self-portrait. For writing as an American, his limits were the utilitarian, mercantile culture he wished to symbolize. Once it had its fire companies and insurance plans, clean streets and street lamps, schools, hospitals, libraries, militia, and all the rest of Ben Franklin's improvements, the hero might relax a little - stop behaving like a Robinson Crusoe tirelessly lugging things in from the wrecked ship (England) in order to improve every part of his domain (America). But this different hero would have to await the civilization of the land.[36]

This portrait of Franklin by Sayre, does not have much effect on his achieved personality, for Franklin today is known throughout the world as one of the greatest achievers of modern time. Moreover, his autobiography in the meantime has been accepted as a popular English classic though the reader has to bear with its loose structure. James M. Cox, an authority on American autobiography, tries to rehabilitate Franklin by saying that he was, in fact, the pioneer of American literature,

> ...Franklin's act of art in the *Autobiography* does not seem revolutionary; it seems even and easy and simple. But it is there in the path, and the best one can do to those professors of English who condescend to it is to say simply and innocently that it is the first American book we have. Before Franklin there was no American literature; there was only English colonial literature. With Franklin came consciousness, total consciousness in the form of autobiography - a history of self-made life written by the man who made it. It is not a fiction but a cultural fact of life, and we have to make the best of it.[37]

Thus, Franklin's legacy to American literature in general and American autobiography in particular remains invaluable.

VI

J. S. Mill's *Autobiography*

While Franklin's *Autobiography* is held together by the narrative device of a self-made man who is humble, though a public figure, J.S. Mill's *Autobiography* is thoroughly engaged in inventing a new narrative mode which James Olney terms "autobiography simplex."[38] Mill, the well-known philosopher devises his narrative line that suits him the best. He narrates the development of his 'intellectual life' instead of 'personal life' and philosophises the years he lives in. As a result his autobiography reads like a philosophical treaty. Further, peopled with literary and historical figures of the time Mill's *Autobiography* gives us more than what the title promises.

Structurally the autobiography lacks a narrative balance. For example, out of seven chapters the first six chapters cover thirty-six years of Mill's life, without having a chronological order. And the last chapter titled, "General View of the Remainder of My Life", telescopes the next thirty years of his public life within few pages. The editorial assistance was provided by Harriet Taylor, first a close friend and subsequently his wife, who revised the entire manuscript according to the taste of the time and current ideology. Thus, Mill's *Autobiography* that we read today had originally gone through several facelifts before it became public.

Mill at the very beginning of his narrative comes out with his objective in a forthright manner. He warns his readers saying that since his uneventful life had nothing much to offer except to record his intellectual growth they must take their own risk while pursuing such an uninteresting life-story. Mill, thus, begins his narrative with the following disclaimer,

> ...I do not for a moment imagine that any part of what I have to relate, can be interesting to the public as a narrative, or as being connected with myself. But I have thought that in an age in which education, and its improvement, are the subject of more, if not of profounder study than at any former period of English history, it may be useful that there should be some record of an education which was unusual and remarkable, and which, whatever else it may have done, has proved how much more than is commonly supposed may be taught, and well taught in those early years which, in the common modes of what is called instruction, are little better than wasted. It has also seemed to me that in an age of transition in opinions, there may be somewhat both of interest and of benefit in noting the successive phases of any mind which was always pressing forward, equally ready to learn and to unlearn

> either from its own thoughts or from those of others. But a motive which weighs more with me than either of these, is a desire to make acknowledgement of the debts which my intellectual and moral development owes to other persons; some of them of recognized eminence, others less known than they deserve to be, and the one to whom most of all is due, one whom the world had no opportunity of knowing.... (p.5)

Mill lists the names of several persons whose personal influences on him ultimately results in his intellectual and moral developments. Mill's first and foremost gratitude goes to his father James Mill, then the founding father of the utilitarian theory, Jeremy Bentham and his close friend turned wife Harriet Taylor. He also acknowledges his gratefulness to several literary personalities like Bacon, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Carlyle and philosophers like Plato, Comte and Hume - to name a few - whose inspiration for the enrichment of his knowledge knows no bound. Mill, not only finds space in his autobiography to praise them, but he also evaluates them critically so to have a proper perspective on their writings and philosophy. As a result Mill's *Autobiography* reads like a polemical treatise. Why does Mill do this? John Sturrock, a critic on autobiographical studies has the following answer to give:

> In behaving as he does, Mill might be thought to disprove the thesis I have been advancing that autobiographers write in order to proclaim not their indebtedness to others for their life's achievement but their own ascendancy, or in extreme cases their intellectual autogeny, a' la Descartes. How is this to be reconciled with Mill's ostentatious concern to come before us as intellectual debtor? Simply enough, when one reflects that publicly to acknowledge one's debts is also to be free of them; and when an acclaimed thinker and public figure such as Mill acknowledges all that he has got from others with so large a show of scruple he will be seen to be acting graciously, in bestowing his commendations from the stronghold of his own intellectual pre-eminence. Graciously or, in the sceptical perspective of the theorist, questionably, since Mill goes so wantonly far in trying to distribute that pre-eminence among others, rather than keeping it for himself.[39]

But, Mill, as it seems, was not so generous when a choice was given between emotion and reason. As a true representative of his age Mill chose, throughout his life reason over emotion, carving no distinction between private and public spheres. This was clearly evident from his attitude shown towards his immediate relations, close friends and acquaintances. For example, Mill knew his father, James Mill only as a teacher-turned-writer-philosopher and nothing more, nothing less. So when he wrote about his father evaluating his role towards his son, he could only discover a teacher in his person. Mill thus remembers his father as someone who, "exerted an amount of labour, care, and perseverance rarely, if ever employed for a similar purpose, in endeavoring to give, according to his own conception, the highest order of intellectual education." (p.7)

Interestingly, Mill never cared to mention his mother - not even once - throughout his narrative. But, Mill is, perhaps, not to be blamed for this. Because, according to the very objective of his autobiography he had chosen only those personalities who had influenced his intellectual and moral development. Perhaps, his mother had not contributed anything worth in this regard. Or Mill might have failed to recognize her contributions. And, so far as his other friends and acquaintances like Bain, Cairnes, Fawcett, Morley and even Spencer were concerned, he chose to narrate those episodes of his life which influenced them and not how they influenced him. Comparing Bacon, Hume and Wordsworth with Bain, Cairnes and Morley, Mill, perhaps, realised that the latter were lesser human beings than the former and hence he ignored them. Thus, Mill was engaged in an exercise of accepting some and rejecting others in a selective manner. By doing so he was trying to avoid the emotional side of life. This is definitely a unique phenomenon found in an autobiography. A literary critic like A. O. J. Cockshut praises Mill for his bold act saying that this is the sign of "the sturdy independence and scrupulous truthfulness of a man so free of convention that he did not need to apologize for lacking feelings that anybody else would have had."[40]

As Mill tells us, his education started fairly at an early age under the able and active guidance of his father at home. Expectedly, Mill from his very childhood days had opportunities to grasp ideas on various critical topics, such as, civilization, government, morality, etc., that too, without attending any formal educational institution. History seemed to be his favourite subject. After learning Latin at the age of eight and Greek and Latin in later periods, he found literature as an important subject which he read avidly through out his life. As a born-thinker his interest in the Reformation, his contempt against priestly tyranny and advocacy for liberty of thought came in his very young age. He always believed that education - whether formal, informal or non-formal - helped to bring about a mental discipline in every human being, which ultimately resulted in restoring moral order. Thus, for Mill, education had an important role to play in society, at large.

Mill from the very beginning of his life had fascination towards utilitarianism, which he learnt from his father and Jeremy Bentham. Since Mill's primary ambition to learn any philosophy was to test its validity as well as applicability in the society his attraction towards utilitarianism came from the uncritical adaptation of the Benthamite principle that the ethical good was what promotes 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. Keeping this

principle in mind Mill even set up the Utilitarian Society to have more discussions on the related issues so that it would be easy for people like him to bring a kind of social reformation in English society which was required then. The irony of the situation was that over the period of time Mill himself shifted his ideological position. After serving certain period of time in India Office in England Mill entered into British Parliament and tried to introduce reformation - not any more as a Benthamite utilitarian, for he knew its flaw - but as a democrat - he refused to accept himself as a socialist or social democrat. Finally, Mill, as everybody knows him today, turned to be a profound individualist. He at this stage realised that if something was right for him that would be right for others, as well. Thus the principle of universalisation of ideas always governed his mind.[41]

Mill loved so much of his own philosophy at time that it resulted in a mental crisis. This he discovered himself and wrote a full chapter giving the title, "A Crisis in my mental history. One stage onward". A critic like M.H. Abraham believes that such a title of the chapter indicates that Mill, like many of his contemporary "adopted the Augustian crisis-pattern to the contemporary design of life as ascending stages of self-formation."[42] For instance, Mill compared the sudden and total apathy and anomie into which he fell at the age of twenty to the state "in which converts to Methodism usually are, when smitten by their first "conviction of sin".... the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down.... I seemed to have nothing left to live for"(pp.137-39); and he stated his condition by substantiating lines from Coleridge's "Dejection": "A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear...."(p.139). The first relief from his "dry heavy dejection" (p.143) came with the reading of a passage from Marmontel's *Memoirs* where Marmontel as a mere boy, after his father's death, promised his family members to do everything for them, even to "supply the place of all that they had lost"(p.145). But even more decisive for his recovery was his introduction to Wordsworth's collective *Poems of 1815*. These poems were "a medicine" writes Mill, "for my state of mind"(p.151) because they represented the interchange between nature and mind; or to put it in Mill's own words, "they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, not mere outward beauty"(p.151). Especially important was the Intimations Ode, in which Mill recognized the designed of crisis, loss and compensatory gain attendant upon the growth from youth into maturity. In the Ode, he writes,

> I found that he too had had similar experience to mine; that he also had felt that the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life was not lasting; but that he had sought

for compensation, and found it, in the way in which he was now teaching me to find it. The result was that I gradually, but completely, emerged from my habitual depression, and was never again subject to it". (p.152)

Apart from Wordsworth the other romantic poet who had influence over Mill's mind was Coleridge. From Coleridge's poetry, Mill writes, he derived great intellectual and moral power. The other personalities who helped him to overcome his stressed mind through their writings were: the essayists Bacon, Macaulay and Carlyle, and the philosophers Comte and Simon. Thus, intellectual pursuits helped Mill to recover from his mental crisis and thereafter he continued to lead a normal life. As a philosopher, Mill tries to find out the reasons of his mental problem and philosophises them in the following words,

> For though my dejection, honestly looked at, could not be called other than egotistical, produced by the ruin, as I thought, of my fabric of happiness, yet the destiny of mankind in general was ever in my thoughts, and could not be separated from my own. I felt that the flaw in my life, must be a flaw in life itself; that the question was, whether, if the reformers of society and government could succeed in their objects, and every person in the community were free and in a state of physical comfort, the pleasure of life, being no longer kept up by struggle and privation, would cease to be pleasures. And I felt that unless I could see my way to some better hope than this for human happiness in general, my dejection must continue; but that if I could see such an outlet, I should then look on the world with pleasure; content as far as I was myself concerned, with any fair share of the general lot. (p. 149)

The above passage truly represents the mind-set of a man who tried to find 'truth' in himself and related it to others. It also underlines Mill's renewal faith on human endeavour to bring happiness in society. Mill, perhaps, did this introspection in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, which registered a sudden revulsion in the world-view of mankind owing to the tremendous changes in the socio-political and economic fronts. As a philosopher as well as public figure Mill's concern for the future of the English society is worth noting. Thus his voice is the voice of his time and society. John Sturrock's concluding observation on Mill strongly supports such an idea, when he writes, "As an autobiographical subject, John Stuart Mill offers himself as the ideal representative of a generation, the voice no longer of a prejudiced class or of a partisan philosophy, but of the truth."[43]

It is, perhaps, an irony that just after the publication of Mill's *Autobiography* a review-article came out in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* to tell us that the text "does not do much to reunite the link of common nature between the world and its men of intellect."[44] The reviewer, Margaret Oliphant, mourning over the 'cultural pessimism' which mostly

reflected in the writings of the 'men of letters' like Mill and others, gave a call to study the alternative autobiographical narratives of the 'commoners' comprised of ordinary men and women, sailors, soldiers and others. Oliphant was, perhaps, making a vital point that after industrial revolution had shaken the very life force of English society, the possibilities of renewing the world-order rested not with the philosophers like Mill but with the common folk who were in the epicenter of English life and culture. Oliphant's points seem to be having important bearing on our study because in Indian society Dalits are socio-culturally placed in a marginal position even though their contributions to making of Indian society and culture are quite great. Their autobiographies are bound to be different from the so-called mainstream Indian autobiographies written by the upper caste/class men and women.

To conclude this chapter, it is now clear that Augustine, Rousseau, Franklin and Mill belonged to different times and societies. Even though they are commonly known as philosophers and public figures, socio-historically they are rooted in their specific cultural milieus. And hence, their mindsets and worldviews are bound to be different from one another. Their personalities are also diverse. For example, while Augustine was deeply involved in preaching and propagating Christianity in the Mediterranean region in the fourth century A.D. when Christianity was about to decline, Rousseau coming more than a millennium later worked hard to bring enlightenment to France along with several others which culminated in giving birth to French Revolution in 1789. Franklin, on the other hand, was a self-made man America has ever produced in modern time. As a multi-facet personality, Franklin's autobiographical journey from rags to riches is quite fascinating. Finally, Mill's development of an autobiographical self through education and philosophy and his concern towards his fellowmen when England was going through a transition due to industrial revolution is equally interesting. Thus, the autobiographical tradition in the West is diverse and each autobiography has to be read differently.

Notes and References

1. There are different versions of Augustine's *Confessions* available in the market. I have used *The Confessions* translated by Edward B. Pusay (1949) for its long introduction and several references given in the text.
2. There are at least two versions of Rousseau's *Confessions* available. One is *The Confessions of J.J. Rousseau* translated by J.M. Cohen (1953). The other one is

Confessions translated by Angela Scholar (2000). I have used the latter version for I felt more comfortable with her translation.

3. There are several editions of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*. I have used *Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography* edited by W. Macdonald (1960) for his long notes.
4. All through out my thesis I have used *John Stuart Mill, Autobiography and Literary Essays*, edited by John M. Robson (1981).
5. There are two different translated texts available on Rassundari Devi's *Amar Jiban.* One by Enakshi Chatterjee with a title *Amar Jiban (My Life).* Another by Tanika Sarkar titled *Words to Win: The Making of Amar Jiban, A Modern Autobiography* (1999). I have used the former one for its literary translation.
6. For details see, A.E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (1926), Methuen, London, 1960. Also see, H.D. Rankin, *Plato and the Individual*, Methuen, London, 1964.
7. For details refer to Georg Misch, *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*, Vol. I, particularly in Part II where he deals with autobiography in the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman World, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1949.
8. Georg Misch refers to several of them in his book, *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*, Vol. II, particularly in Part III which he gives the sub-title, "The Flowering of Autobiography in Late Antiquity", Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1950.
9. "Nearly everything Bunyan wrote was confined to a single subject, the psychology of conversion", writes Dean Ebner. For more details on Bunyan see Chapter One titled, "Grace Abounding as Baptist Autobiography" in his book *Autobiography in the Seventeenth-Century England: Theology and the Self*, Mouton, The Hague, 1971, pp.22-71.
10. Some of the early English novelists like Defoe, Richardson and Sterne wrote their novels in the first person narrative, perhaps, to avoid the stigma of fiction. Because during the seventeenth century autobiography in England had already been accepted as an authentic genre to deal with the actual life experience of a person. However the readers had doubts about the authenticity of fictions.
11. Suzanne Nalbantian calls autobiographical novel as "aesthetic autobiography." More on this subject see Suzanne Nalbantian, *Aesthetic Autobiography: From Life to Art in Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Anais Nin*, Macmillan, New York, 1997.

12. Robert F. Sayre refers to Robert Southey in his work, *The Examined Self: Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams, Henry James*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1964, p.4.
13. Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, edited by Paul John Ekain and translated by Katherine Leary, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1989, p.4.
14. Discussion and definition of autobiography may also be found in Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1960; James Olney, *Metaphors of Self: the meaning of autobiography*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1972; James Olney, *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980; William C. Spengemann, *The Forms of Autobiography: Episodes in the History of a Literary Genre*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1980; Sandra Frieden, *Autobiography: Self into Form. German-Language Autobiographical Writings of the 1970's*, Verlag Peterlang, Frankfurt, 1983; John Sturrock, *The Language of Autobiography*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993 and many others.
15. Estelle C. Jelinek, *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography: From Antiquity to the Present*, Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1986, p.4.
16. James Olney, *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (ed), op.cit., p.19.
17. John Sturrock, *The Language of Autobiography*, op.cit., p.20.
18. Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography*, op.cit., p.21.
19. Georg Misch, *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*, Vol. II, op. cit., p.646.
20. Robert F. Sayre, *The Examined Self*, op.cit., pp.11-12.
21. F.W. Farrar in his biography on St. Augustine mentions that he is still traditionally remembered among Christians as Rumi Kebir, 'the great Christian'. For details see F.W. Farrar, *The Life of St. Augustine* (1889), edited by Robert Backhouse, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1993, p. 172.
22. Georg Misch, *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*, Vol.II, op.cit., p.650.
23. G.R. Evans writes about Augustine's idea of God thus: "Augustine's idea of God remained in its essentials, that of his philosophical days: he held firmly to the supreme goodness of God and he believed increasingly surely in his providential care for the worlds he had made. His conception of God had developed a majesty and a richness it had lacked before God became a person to him, someone with whom he could hold the conversation of which we hear one side in the *Confessions*. He was sure that ultimately nothing but good could come to the faithful soul; no threat or disturbance

or trouble in this life could separate the Christian from the love of God". For more see G.R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982, p.166.

24. From F.W. Farrar's biography on St. Augustine we come to know that Monica bore to Patricius at least three children - Augustine, Navigius, and a daughter who is not named, who afterwards became the abbess of a community of nuns.
25. Augustine left a vast body of writings, including about 232 books, 300 letters and 400 sermons, as well as many philosophical and theological treaties.
26. Augustine's philosophic thought takes its preliminary form in a dozen short treaties dictated between 386 and 395. Typical of these are the dialogues *On Order* (386), *On the Immortality of the Soul* (387), *On Music* (389), *On Faith and the Creed* (393) and *On Free-Will* (395). These works represent a rethinking by Augustine of Platonic philosophy, influenced by his reading of the Old and New Testaments in the Bible. These early works already sketch Augustine's psychological interiorism, his introspective meditation on his own mental experiences. More profound rethinking starts around 400, with the *Confessions* onward to the *Retractations* (427), a review of nearly al his writings preceding the year 427. The great works - *the Commentary on the Psalms* (410), *the Trinity* (410), *Literal Meaning of Genesis* (421) and *the City of God* (413-426) – are primarily theological in content, but they also include many philosophical sections. For more details refer The *World's Great Philosophers*, edited by Robert L. Arrington, Blackwell, United Kingdom, 2003
27. Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, translated by L.E.M. Lynch, Victor Gollancz, London, 1961, p.1.
28. Robert Elbaz, *The Changing Nature of the Self: A Critical Study of the Autobiographic Discourse*, Croom Helm, London, 1988.
29. Peter France, *Rousseau: Confessions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, p. 38.
30. Luther M. Martin *et. al.*, *Technology of the Self: A Seminar with M. Foucault*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1988, p. 107.
31. Robert C. Solomon summerising Rousseau's contributions to philosophy thus writes: "Introspective, antisocial, and almost paranoid, Rousseau alone among the great philosophers of France made an enormous impact not only on the thinking of revolutionary France, but on the history of ideas. We still admire the wit and irony of Voltaire but he is rarely read for his ideas. The brilliance of Diderot is still insufficiently appreciated, and even Hume, often said (in Britain at least) to be the

greatest philosopher of modern times, plays a role in philosophy that is more provocative than inspirational. Curiously, though, the great impact of Rousseau in philosophy was not felt and expressed in France but rather in neighbouring Germany. Indeed, it is almost as if French philosophy went into eclipse after the Enlightenment. Rousseau's inspirational discovery first came to fruition in the academic cloisters of provincial Prussia in the work of Kant, than through Schiller, Goethe, Hegel and Marx it came to influence half of the civilized world." For details, See Robert C. Solomon, *Continental Philosophy since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988, p.21.

32. Peter France, *Rousseau: Confessions*, op. cit., p. 2.
33. Stephen Spender, "Confessions and Autobiography" in James Olney, *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (ed.), op. cit. p. 121.
34. Peter France, *Rousseau: Confessions*, op. cit., p. 111.
35. Robert F. Sayre, *The Examined Self*, op. cit., pp. 16 -17.
36. Robert F. Sayre, "Autobiography and America" in James Olney, *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (ed.) op. cit., p. 158. William C. Spengemann and L.R. Lundquist are also critical of Franklin. In their joint article on "Autobiography and the American Myth," they write, "The mythical elements are all here: the progress from penury to wealth, the religious overtones of secular success, the identification of affluence and worldly reputation with happiness. Furthermore, the sense of personal fulfillment, characteristically, makes the subject feel that he has the right to teach and so to perpetuate a viable tradition. His teaching was well heeded, as we know; a whole nation of entrepreneurs has found him a model of success, perfectly "fit to be imitated". Refer *American Quarterly*, Vol. XVII, No.3 Fall, 1965, p.509.
37. James M. Cox, *Recovering Literature's Lost Ground: Essays in American Autobiography*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1989, p. 19.
38. James Olney, *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (ed.) op. cit., p. 95.
39. John Sturrock, *The Language of Autobiography*, op. cit., p. 197.
40. O.J. Cockshut, *The Art of Autobiography in 19th and 20th Century England*, Yale University Press, London, 1984, p.9.
41. Joseph Hamburger sums of Mill's ideas and ideologies thus: "In sharp contrast to the philosophical assumptions of mid-nineteenth-century liberals, Mill had an underlying philosophy that was much more comprehensive. It included his theory of history, his

on the need for moral regeneration, and his assumption that moral authority had reinstitutionalized by means of a secular religion. All this fostered his ambition ıst cultural reform, and this made the program and policies of even advanced ılism seen piecemeal unambitious, and deficient. His theories about history, y, and morality, in contrast, brought him to "far bolder aspirations and pations of the future." From his more comprehensive perspective, liberalism was ɔle but incomplete, and his commitment to liberal values was diminished by er, not obviously compatible belief in the need to subdue and control the ɛnt selfishness of human nature by imposing order and authority upon it. He d liberal values, but only as representing part of the truth, leading him to attempt ombine and reconcile" liberal and other nonliberal truth. Consequently his on diverges considerably from even that of moderate liberalism." For details see h Hamburger, *John Stuart Mill on Liberty and Control*, Princeton University , Princeton, 1999, pp.233-34.

nore details refer, M.H. Abraham, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and ution in Romantic Literature* (1971), W.W. Norton and Company, London, p.136.

Sturrock, *The Language of Autobiography*, op. cit., p. 202.

aret Oliphant, "New Books (No. XV)", *Blackwood's Edinburg Magazine*, CXV, , 1874, p. 444. More on this see in Laura Marcus, *Auto/biographical discourses: ry, criticism and practice*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1994, p.44.